

WAR-RELATED INJURY PREVENTION

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

- In the 20th century, 72 million deaths (nearly half of which were civilians) occurred in 25 conflicts worldwide.
- From 1987 through 1997, 2 million children were killed and 4 to 5 million children were seriously injured during armed conflict.
- Each year in Afghanistan (one of the most heavily landmined countries in the world), 2,000 to 3,000 people are killed or injured by landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). About two people per 1,000 are permanently disabled.
- In recent years, frequency of rape and sexual violence has increased during and after conflicts. During the conflict in Bosnia, estimates of the number of women raped ranged from 10,000 to 25,000.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

- CDC has provided support to the Landmine Survivors Network (LSN) for the past 4 years. LSN programs help people in war-affected countries to facilitate socioeconomic reintegration of landmine survivors and help survivors of traumatic limb-loss to recover from their injuries.
- CDC, the World Health Organization, and the Pan American Health Organization, have helped establish post conflict injury surveillance programs in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Colombia, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, and Mozambique. CDC established emergency room-based surveillance systems to track both fatal and nonfatal injuries to provide data so risk factors could be identified and injury intervention programs could be developed.
- CDC, in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, the International Rescue Committee, and the Mine Clearance Planning Agency of Afghanistan, implemented the largest, nationwide war-related mortality, injury, disability, and mental health survey in Afghanistan. Data collected from more than 6,000 people have been used to establish national estimates of mortality, injury, disability, and mental health status.
- CDC organized a war-related injury and public health conference with the Sixth World Injury Conference. CDC sponsored 30 scholarship candidates from conflict settings to participate in this workshop about landmines, UXO, small arms, sexual violence, surveillance, and survey methodology.
- At the request of UNICEF, CDC organized and conducted an epidemiology training course to provide select mine-risk educators with the skills necessary to incorporate epidemiology and other public health practices into the development and evaluation of mine-risk education and other prevention programs.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

- CDC will help UNICEF evaluate several mine-risk education programs to determine their effectiveness in teaching people to identify and avoid landmine and UXO injuries.
- CDC will initiate efforts to measure the impact of sexual violence in the context of war through surveillance and surveys in conflict and post conflict settings; efforts are underway to develop a sexual violence survey in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- CDC will continue to provide technical assistance to the United Nations and other nongovernmental organizations in their efforts to prevent war-related injuries.

For additional information on this or other CDC programs, visit www.cdc.gov/program

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